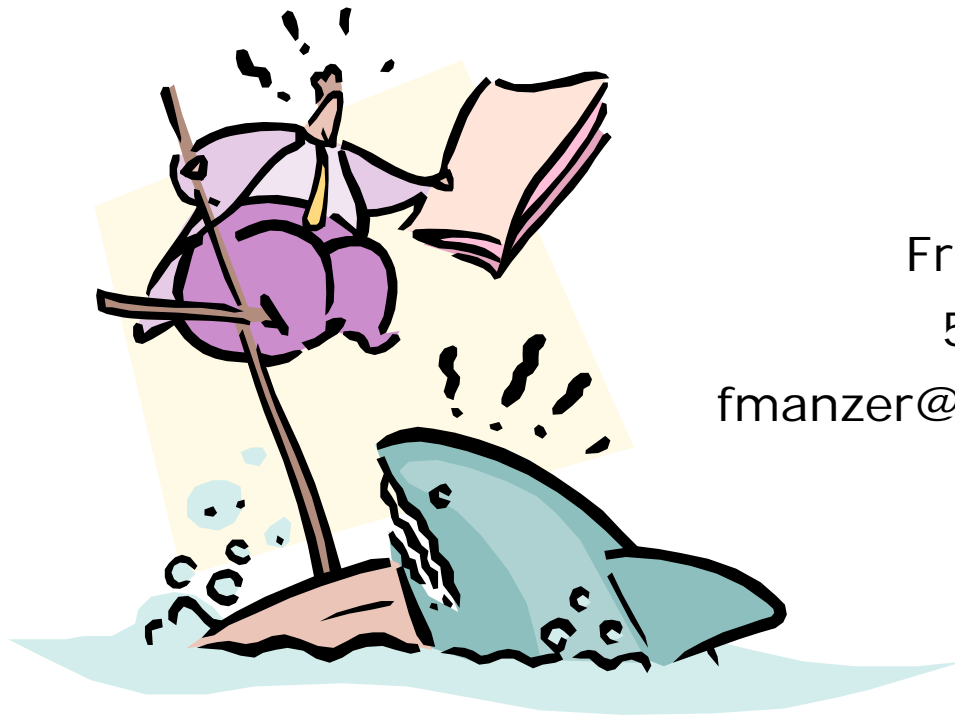


The Impact of Fear on Project Success



Frederick Manzer

540.845.0309

fmanzer@strategybridgeintl.com

Objective

- ❑ A fear of failure causes many problems in developing a project plan and performing projects. When combined with the use of fear as a motivator the impact is multiplied. This presentation examines the source and impact of fear in the execution of projects and proposes solutions to reduce its affects. Attendees will gain insight to their role in this process and how to overcome the negative impact on their projects.

Fear – Does your team have it?

- ☐ Beards - Pogonophobia
- ☐ Criticism- Enissophobia
- ☐ Decisions: making decisions - Decidophobia.
- ☐ Defeat - Kakorrhaphiophobia
- ☐ Neglecting duty or responsibility - Paralipophobia.
- ☐ Failure - Atychiphobia or Kakorrhaphiophobia
- ☐ Imperfection - Atelophobia
- ☐ Punishment by a rod or of severe criticism - Rhabdophobia.
- ☐ Punishment - Poinophobia.
- ☐ Being ridiculed - Catagelophobia or Katagelophobia.

How does it affect their behavior?

A successful project / person?

- ☐ Meet technical (product) requirements?
- ☐ On schedule?
- ☐ Within resource (cost) objectives?
- ☐ Customer satisfaction?
- ☐ Project team satisfaction?
- ☐ Did the best possible?
- ☐ Did better than expected?
- ☐ Project team grew as individuals?
- ☐ Management got their bonuses?



In one of your projects:

- ☐ Task **work** estimate of 60, but ...
 - Expect inputs to be late and incomplete
 - Expect interruptions – higher priorities
 - Know the task is hard
 - Must complete on promised date
- ☐ If we had a specialized computer program
 - Could reduce 60 hours to 40 hours
 - ☐ Requires 2 hours to install and 6 hours to learn
 - ☐ Costs \$5000
 - ☐ Has other potential future application

What would you estimate?

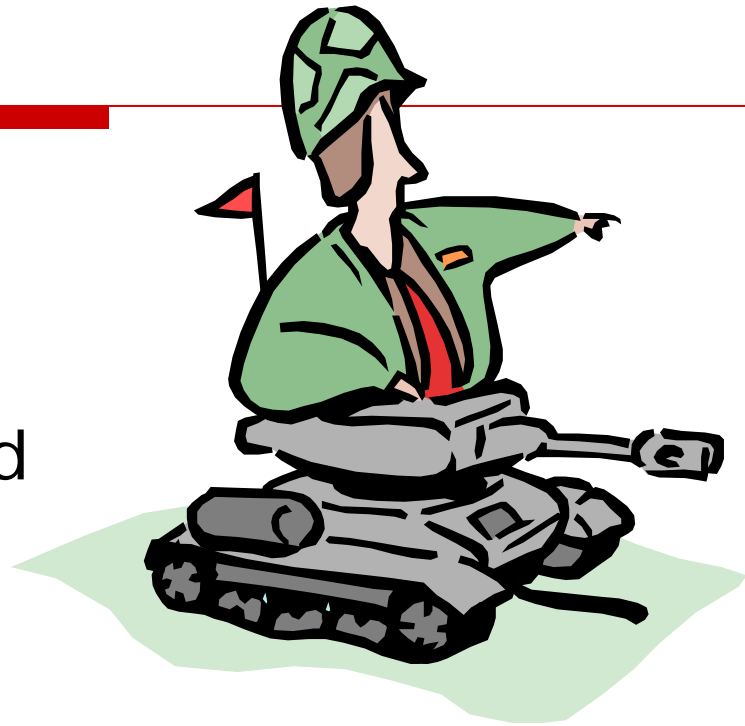
Or:

- Task authorized as 80 hours and must complete by end of month (80 hours away)
- Required inputs not received and expect the task may take 20% longer than estimate
- “On time” is critical to project success
- Individuals are responsible for results
 - A “no excuses” environment
 - “Figure how to make it happen”
 - Being a “good team member” is considered important

What would you tell Management?

What is the organizational “culture”?

- ☐ Strong Leadership
- ☐ Objective Oriented
- ☐ Failure is not tolerated



- ☐ Collaborative
- ☐ Supportive and encouraging
- ☐ Focus on personal growth



How is “failure” handled?

- ☐ Blame the guilty?
- ☐ Blame the innocent?
- ☐ Pass it down the ladder?
- ☐ Last person in the barrel?
- ☐ First person in the barrel?
- ☐ It is “management’s” fault?
- ☐ Blame those absent?
- ☐ Blame those present?



Fear's not rational, but perception

☐ Concern about negative impact:

- Pay and promotions
- Peer acceptance
- Future job opportunities
- Self satisfaction with performance



☐ Threats:

- "Must" or else (dates, costs, etc.)

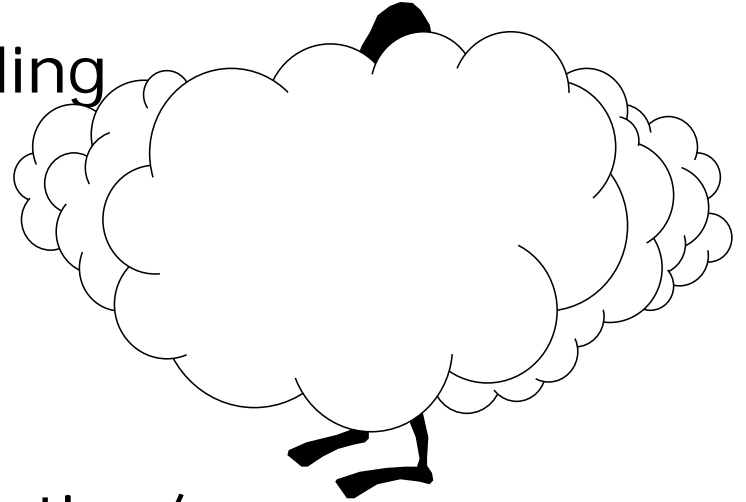
☐ Uncontrollable circumstances

- Risk
- Interruptions
- Changes



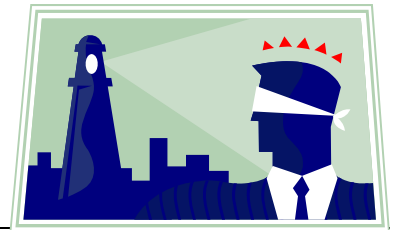
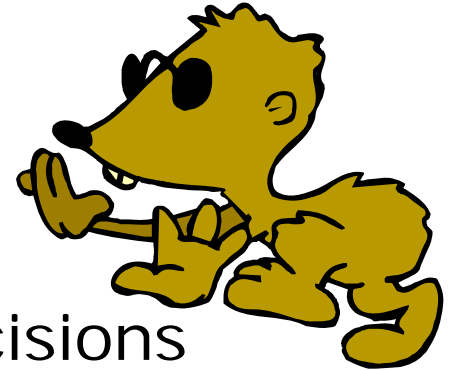
What people with fear do:

- ☐ Understate ability to perform
 - Create reserves or padding
 - ☐ Interruptions
 - ☐ Risks
 - ☐ Complexity
 - Set low standards
 - Provide room for negotiation/recovery
- ☐ Hide results
 - Believe they can recover
 - Cannot be guilty if not discovered
 - Minimize the number of “beatings”



Impact of fear based management:

- ☐ Inflated estimates
- ☐ A culture of deception
 - Poor information leads to poor decisions
 - ☐ Effort required to accomplish project is overstated
 - ☐ Problems / risks are not identified early
 - ☐ Finger pointing and blame passing
- ☐ A focus on self protection
 - People focus on not failing
 - Trying hard does not produce desired results, why try?
- ☐ Projects finish late and overrun

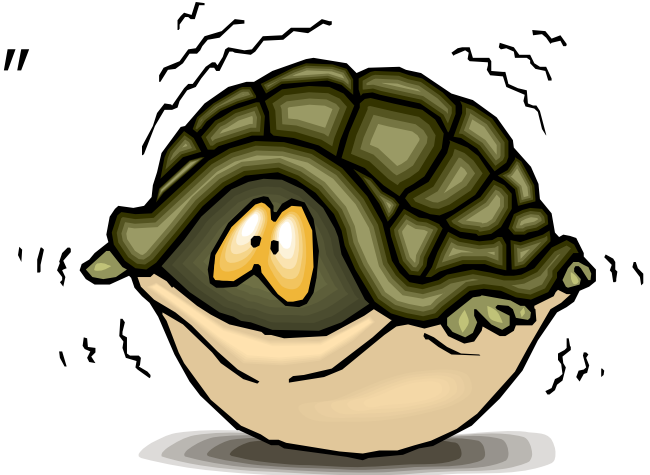


Question

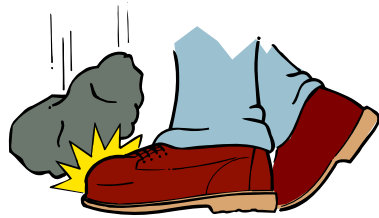
☐ What is the difference between
"FEAR"

**Where fear is
present, wisdom
cannot be.
--- Lactantius**

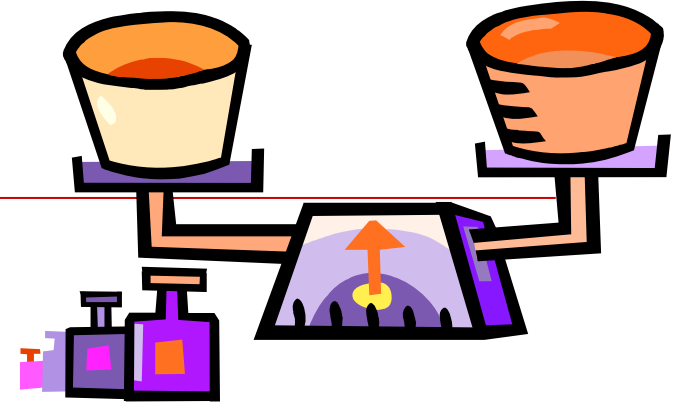
and



☐ Experience or Wisdom?



The Wisdom Alternative



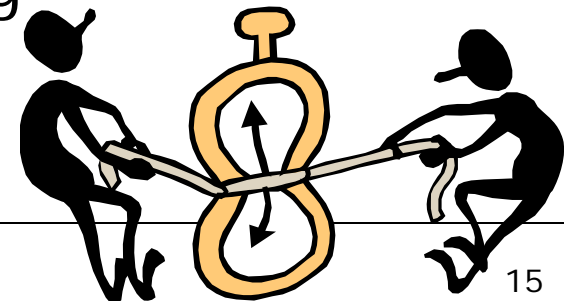
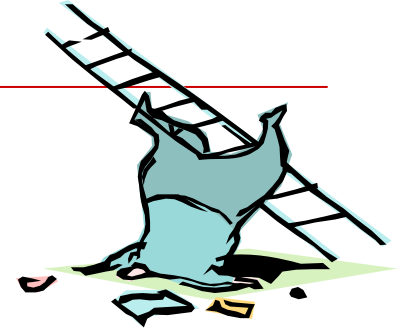
- ☐ Focus on the important
 - Are people doing the best they can?
 - Get better data and better decisions sooner
 - Encourage rather than discourage staff
- ☐ Hold people responsible for what they control
 - Effort rather than results
 - Performance rather than inputs
 - Honesty
 - Suggestions and improvements

Approach

- ☐ Separate work from risk
 - Work – what know must do – minimum
 - Risk – what could prevent success
 - ☐ Rework
 - ☐ Change
 - ☐ Interference
 - ☐ Complexity
- ☐ Set performance goals based on effort
 - Accountability for effort, not how it turns out
- ☐ Reward innovation and imagination
- ☐ Management responsibility for results

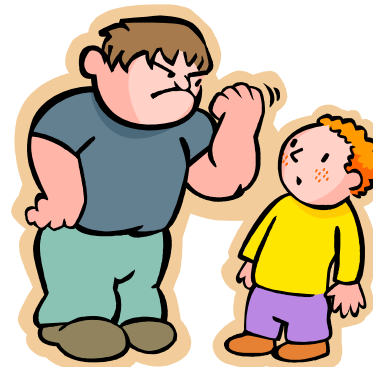
But we “need” performance

- Without fear, performance goes up
- Challenge people to find solutions
 - How can this be made to happen – what can we do?
 - Without a solution a “squeeze” does not work
- Challenge people to do better
 - Fearless people accept impossible objectives
 - It cannot be done without trying

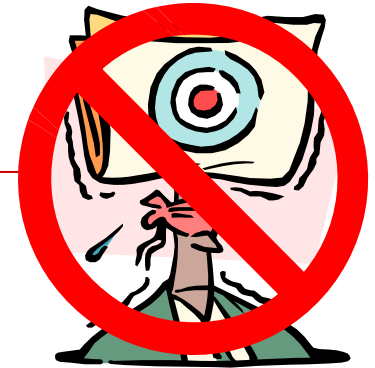


Dealing with people

- Everything important we learned in kindergarten
 - People can give their best effort, but cannot guarantee results
 - Playing nice together creates friendships and dependability
 - No one likes a bully



Objective



- ☐ Drive out fear (Deming point 8)
 - People should feel safe in identifying their fears, concerns, risks, etc – getting help
 - Reward individuals who did their best
 - Honesty should never be punished
- ☐ Personal growth and organizational success
 - No fear = No limits
 - Early identification = prevention
 - Focus on prevention rather than correction
 - Imagination solves more problems than fear

Other comments on fear

- ❑ Fear is a tyrant and a despot, more terrible than the rack, more potent than the snake."

----- Edgar Wallace - *The Clue of the Twisted Candle* (1916)

- ❑ "What we fear comes to pass more speedily than what we hope."

----- Publilius Syrus - *Moral Sayings* (1st C B.C.)

Questions?
